

# OPINIONS AND DECLARATIONS RENDERED BY THE INTER- NATIONAL COMMISSION ON ZOOLOGICAL NOMENCLATURE

*Edited by*

**FRANCIS HEMMING, C.M.G., C.B.E.**  
Secretary to the Commission

VOLUME 1. SECTION E. Part E.10. Pp. 151—160

## DIRECTION 71

Determination under the Plenary Powers of the gender to be attributed to the generic name *Lepisma* Linnaeus, 1758 (Class Insecta, Order Thysanura) (*Direction* supplementary to *Opinion* 104)

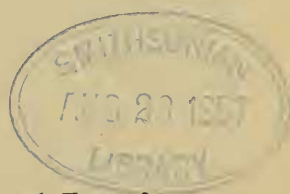
LONDON :

Printed by Order of the International Trust for  
Zoological Nomenclature  
and

Sold on behalf of the International Commission on Zoological  
Nomenclature by the International Trust at its Publications Office  
41, Queen's Gate, London, S.W.7  
1957

Price Six Shillings and Sixpence

(*All rights reserved*)



# INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION ON ZOOLOGICAL NOMENCLATURE

## COMPOSITION AT THE TIME OF THE ADOPTION OF THE RULING GIVEN IN DIRECTION 71

### A. The Officers of the Commission

*Honorary Life President* : Dr. Karl JORDAN (*British Museum (Natural History), Zoological Museum, Tring, Herts., England*)

---

*President* : Professor James Chester BRADLEY (*Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y., U.S.A.*)  
(12th August 1953)

*Vice-President* : Senhor Dr. Afranio do AMARAL (*Sao Paulo, Brazil*) (12th August 1953)

*Secretary* : Mr. Francis HEMMING (*London, England*) (27th July 1948)

### B. The Members of the Commission

(*Arranged in order of precedence by reference to date of election or of most recent re-election, as prescribed by the International Congress of Zoology*)

Professor H. BOSCHMA (*Rijksmuseum van Natuurlijke Historie, Leiden, The Netherlands*)  
(1st January 1947)

Senor Dr. Angel CABRERA (*La Plata, Argentina*) (27th July 1948)

Mr. Francis HEMMING (*London, England*) (27th July 1948) (*Secretary*)

Dr. Henning LEMCHE (*Universitetets Zoologiske Museum, Copenhagen, Denmark*) (27th July 1948)

Professor Teiso ESAKI (*Kyushu University, Fukuoka, Japan*) (17th April 1950)

Professor Pierre BONNET (*Université de Toulouse, France*) (9th June 1950)

Mr. Norman Denbigh RILEY (*British Museum (Natural History), London*) (9th June 1950)

Professor Tadeusz JACZEWSKI (*Institute of Zoology, Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw, Poland*) (15th June 1950)

Professor Robert MERTENS (*Natur-Museum u. Forschungs-Institut Senckenberg, Frankfurt a.M., Germany*) (5th July 1950)

Professor Erich Martin HERING (*Zoologisches Museum der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Germany*) (5th July 1950)

Senhor Dr. Afranio do AMARAL (*S. Paulo, Brazil*) (12th August 1953) (*Vice-President*)

Professor J. R. DYMOND (*University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada*) (12th August 1953)

Professor J. Chester BRADLEY (*Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y., U.S.A.*) (12th August 1953) (*President*)

Professor Harold E. VOKES (*University of Tulane, Department of Geology, New Orleans, Louisiana, U.S.A.*) (12th August 1953)

Professor Béla HANKÓ (*Mezőgazdasági Múzeum, Budapest, Hungary*) (12th August 1953)

Dr. Norman R. STOLL (*Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research, New York, N.Y., U.S.A.*) (12th August 1953)

Mr. P. C. SYLVESTER-BRADLEY (*Sheffield University, Sheffield, England*) (12th August 1953)

Dr. L. B. HOLTHUIS (*Rijksmuseum van Natuurlijke Historie, Leiden, The Netherlands*) (12th August 1953)

Dr. K. H. L. KEY (*Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation, Canberra, A.C.T., Australia*) (15th October 1954)

Dr. Alden H. MILLER (*Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, University of California, U.S.A.*) (29th October 1954)

Doc. Dr. Ferdinand PRANTL (*Národní Museum v Praze, Prague, Czechoslovakia*) (30th October 1954)

Professor Dr. Wilhelm KÜHNELT (*Zoologisches Institut der Universität, Vienna, Austria*) (6th November 1954)

Professor F. S. BODENHEIMER (*The Hebrew University, Jerusalem, Israel*) (11th November 1954)

Professor Ernst MAYR (*Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard College, Cambridge, Massachusetts, U.S.A.*) (4th December 1954)

Professor ENRICO TORTONESE (*Museo di Storia Naturale "G. Doria", Genova, Italy*) (16th December 1954)

## DIRECTION 71

DETERMINATION UNDER THE PLENARY POWERS  
OF THE GENDER TO BE ATTRIBUTED TO THE  
GENERIC NAME "LEPISMA" LINNAEUS, 1758  
(CLASS INSECTA, ORDER THYSANURA)  
("DIRECTION" SUPPLEMENTARY TO  
"OPINION" 104)

**RULING** :—It is hereby ruled under the Plenary Powers that the generic name *Lepisma* Linnaeus, 1758 (Class Insecta, Order Thysanura) a name placed on the *Official List of Generic Names in Zoology* by the Ruling given in *Opinion* 104, is to be treated as being of the feminine gender.

### I. THE STATEMENT OF THE CASE

On 11th July 1955 Mr. Francis Hemming, Secretary to the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature prepared for the consideration of the Commission the following paper in which he drew attention to difficulties which had arisen in assigning to the generic name *Lepisma* Linnaeus, 1758 (Class Insecta, Order Thysanura), a name which had been placed on the *Official List of Generic Names in Zoology* by the Ruling given in *Opinion* 104 (1928, *Smithson. misc. Coll.* 73 (No. 5) : 25—28) a gender which would be both correct and also consistent with established practice :—

Proposed use of the Plenary Powers to prescribe for the generic name  
"Lepisma" Linnaeus, 1758 (Class Insecta, Order Thysanura) a  
gender in harmony with accepted usage

By FRANCIS HEMMING, C.M.G., C.B.E.

(Secretary to the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature)

The question of the gender to be attributed to the generic names in the Phylum Arthropoda placed on the *Official List of Generic Names in Zoology* in the period up to the end of 1936 has recently been examined

in the light of a Report furnished, at the request of the International Trust for Zoological Nomenclature, by Mr. F. J. Lelievre, then of the Classical Languages Department of Bedford College, London University. If we leave aside the names of genera of the Order Decapoda placed on the *Official List* during the above period (which are being dealt with separately), we find, as the result of consultations with interested specialists, that in the case of all except one of the fifty-six generic names concerned, the gender which has been ascertained to be the correct gender is also the gender currently adopted by specialists in the group concerned. The single exception is the name *Lepisma* Linnaeus, 1758 (Class Insecta, Order Thysanura), with which the present application is concerned.

2. The word "Lepisma" is a Greek word of neuter gender. This name was, however, treated as a feminine word by Linnaeus and, as I am informed by Dr. Theresa Clay (*British Museum (Natural History), London*), has been so treated by all subsequent authors. Dr. Clay, writing on 7th January 1955, reported as follows:—

*Lepisma* contains something like twenty or thirty species and includes one name with a feminine termination which is widely used in the non-specialist literature, namely *Lepisma saccharina* Linnaeus, the silver fish.

3. In carrying out the duty imposed upon it under a General Directive issued by the International Congress of Zoology, Paris, 1948, that an appropriate gender be assigned to each generic name already by that time placed on the *Official List of Generic Names in Zoology*, the Commission has consistently taken the view that linguistic considerations should in this matter be tempered by a due regard for accepted nomenclatorial practice and should not be permitted to become the instrument for vexatious and confusing nomenclatorial changes. In view of the unanimous practice of specialists in assigning the feminine gender to the generic name *Lepisma* and the fact that the type species of this genus has as its specific name an adjective formed with a feminine termination (*Lepisma saccharina* Linnaeus, 1758) and is a species which is widely cited in non-specialist literature, it appears to me that this is a case which falls within the class for which the Commission has taken the view that an exception should be made to the general rule and is therefore one where common usage rather than linguistic niceties ought to prevail.

4. I accordingly recommend that the Commission should use its Plenary Powers to direct that the feminine gender be attributed to the generic name *Lepisma* Linnaeus, 1758, and that this gender be therefore inscribed in the entry on the *Official List of Generic Names in Zoology* relating to this name.

## II. THE SUBSEQUENT HISTORY OF THE CASE

**2. Registration of the present application :** Upon the receipt of Mr. Hemming's paper, the question of the gender to be attributed to the generic name *Lepisma* Linnaeus, 1758, was allotted the Registered Number Z.N.(S.) 988.

**3. Support received before publication :** Prior to the publication of the present application support for the attribution of the feminine gender to the generic name *Lepisma* Linnaeus was received from two specialists. The comments so received are reproduced in the following paragraphs.

**4. Support received from Theresa Clay (British Museum (Natural History), London) :** On 18th July 1955 Dr. Theresa Clay (*British Museum (Natural History), London*) addressed the following letter to the Office of the Commission in regard to the present case :—

Linnaeus, when he originally described *Lepisma* in 1758, considered it to be feminine as shown by his inclusion of the species *L. saccharina* and it has been used in this gender since. *Lepisma saccharina* Linn., the widely distributed "silver-fish", is of some economic importance and has been frequently referred to in books and papers dealing with descriptions and control of insect pests. In the more specialised systematic literature there are some twenty or so species recognised in the genus, all of which have been accorded the feminine gender. In view of these facts I should like to support the proposed use of the Plenary Powers to attribute the feminine gender to the name *Lepisma* Linnaeus, 1758.

**5. Support received from M. J. Delany (University of Glasgow) :** On 29th July 1955 Mr. M. J. Delany (*University of Glasgow*) addressed the following letter of support for the present application to the Office of the Commission :—

I should like to support Mr. Hemming's recommendation that the feminine gender should be attributed to the generic name *Lepisma* Linnaeus, 1758.

To my knowledge all species of *Lepisma* have been accorded the feminine gender, as far as this is applicable, since 1758 when Linnaeus first described the genus under the name *Lepisma saccharina*. In view of this I suggest the International Commission exercises its Plenary Powers to validate the feminine gender of *Lepisma* Linnaeus, 1758, as proposed by Mr. Hemming.

**6. Publication of the present application :** The present application was sent to the printer on 23rd August 1955 and was published on 30th December in the same year in Part 9 of Volume 11 of the *Bulletin of Zoological Nomenclature* (Hemming, 1955, *Bull. zool. Nomencl.* **11** : 299—300). The comments from Dr. Theresa Clay and Mr. Delany were published at the same time as the present application (Clay, 1955, *Bull. zool. Nomencl.* **11** : 300 ; Delany, 1955, *ibid.* **11** : 300).

**7. Issue of Public Notices :** Under the revised procedure prescribed by the Thirteenth International Congress of Zoology, Paris, 1948 (1950, *Bull. zool. Nomencl.* **4** : 51—56), Public Notice of the possible use by the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature of its Plenary Powers in the present case was given on 30th December 1955 (a) in Part 9 of Volume 11 of the *Bulletin of Zoological Nomenclature* (the Part in which Mr. Hemming's paper was published) and (b) to the other prescribed serial publications. In addition such Notice was given to four general zoological serial publications and to seven entomological serials in Europe and America.

**8. Comments received after the publication of the present application :** Following the publication of the present application comments were received from three specialists, of whom two supported and one objected to the action proposed in the present case. The comments so received are reproduced in the immediately following paragraphs.

**9. Support received from Joshua L. Baily, Jr. (San Diego, California, U.S.A.) :** On 27th January 1956 Dr. Joshua L. Baily, Jr. (*San Diego, California, U.S.A.*) addressed a letter to the Office of the Commission in which he commented on a number of applications which had recently been published in the *Bulletin*

of *Zoological Nomenclature*. His remarks concerning the present case were as follows :—

. . . . .

The third of these applications deals specifically with the generic name *Lepisma*, a name which is grammatically neuter, but which by common consent has always been treated as feminine. The genus is outside my field and I do not know if the statement is true that the feminine gender has always been attributed to this name, but if this be the case there is no reason why the gender should not be changed in order to facilitate stability.

**10. Support received from F. A. Urquhart (Royal Ontario Museum, Ontario, Canada) :** On 1st February 1956 Dr. F. A. Urquhart (*Royal Ontario Museum, Ontario, Canada*) addressed the following letter to the Office of the Commission in support of the present case :—

I most definitely would support the use of the plenary powers to prescribe for the generic name *Lepisma* a gender in harmony with accepted usage. I do not think it would accomplish any useful purpose to insist upon the proper gender "neuter" for this group word.

**11. Objection received from Jiří Paclt (Bratislava, Czechoslovakia) :** On 4th March 1956 Dr. Jiří Paclt (*Bratislava, Czechoslovakia*) addressed the following letter to the Office of the Commission in which he expressed his objections to the present case :—

The incorrect usage by Linnaeus, who believed the name *Lepisma* to be feminine in gender has not been followed by all subsequent authors. Of old authors, J. F. Gmelin (1790, *Systema Naturae* (ed. 13) 1(5) : 2906), L. Mitterpacher (1799, *Compendium Historiae Naturalis* : 279) and G. R. Treviranus (1817, *Vermischte Schriften* 2(8)) used all the correct (neuter) gender and wrote *Lepisma saccharinum*. Of more recent authors, G. de Rossi (1881, *Ent. Nachr.* 8 : 22) treated the name as neuter (*Lepisma saccharinum*) and O. Meissner, writing initially about *Lepisma saccharina* (1908, *Int. ent. Z.* 2 : 47), corrected himself later on to *Lepisma saccharinum* (1908, *ibid.* : 72). Also, H. Weidner corrected himself in the second edition of his "Bestimmungstabellen der Vorratsschädlinge und des Hausungeziefers Mitteleuropas" (1953 : 30—31), when speaking about *Lepisma* and

*Ctenolepisma*. Furthermore, some Russian authors are familiar with the correct gender of *Lepisma* (of the modern ones, Sarov).

Myself, I have throughout used, both in the *Genera Insectorum*, Thysanura (to be published shortly) and a standard monograph on Apterygota (1956, *Biol. primär flügellosen Insekten*, Jena) the correct (neuter) form of all specific epithets pertaining to the genus *Lepisma* and allied genera the names of which are formed from that name, e.g. *Heterolepisma* and *Ctenolepisma*. Finally, there were proposed recently generic names of several related genera (e.g. *Apteryskenoma*) which, for sake of certain grammatical uniformity with *Lepisma*, are likely to be neuter in gender.

We may remember the revised rule of the Amsterdam Colloquium for determining the gender of generic names: "The gender of a generic name consisting of a word of Greek or Latin origin is to be the gender of the word concerned as recorded in the standard lexicons of Classical Latin, notwithstanding any contrary zoological usage". We may remember also the existence of a number of important genera (e.g. *Ctenolepisma*) the name of which is derived from the *Lepisma* and would consequently raise the same problem of applying the Plenary Powers. It would appear somewhat absurd, therefore, to consider the application Z.N.(S.) 988 in detail. Nobody of the versed zoologists will, in my view, support such a proposal.

### III. THE DECISION TAKEN BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION ON ZOOLOGICAL NOMENCLATURE

**12. Issue of Voting Paper V.P.(56)35 :** On 27th July 1956, a Voting Paper (V.P.(56)35) was issued in which the Members of the Commission were invited to vote either for, or against, "the proposal relating to the gender to be attributed to the generic name *Lepisma* Linnaeus, 1758, as set out in paragraph 4 on page 300 of Volume 11 of the *Bulletin of Zoological Nomenclature*" [i.e. in the paragraph numbered as above in the paper reproduced in the first paragraph of the present *Direction*].

**13. The Prescribed Voting Period :** As the foregoing Voting Paper was issued under the Three-Month Rule, the Prescribed Voting Period closed on 27th October 1956.



**14. Particulars of the Voting on Voting Paper V.P.(56)35 :** At the close of the Prescribed Voting Period, the state of the voting on Voting Paper V.P.(56)35 was as follows :—

(a) *Affirmative Votes had been given by the following twenty-three (23) Commissioners (arranged in the order in which Votes were received) :*

Holthuis ; Bodenheimer ; Riley ; Sylvester-Bradley ; Vokes ; Bradley (J.C.) ; Mertens ; Jaczewski ; Esaki ; Key ; Hankó ; Lemche ; Hemming ; Dymond ; Mayr ; Miller ; Bonnet ; Prantl ; Tortonese ; Boschma ; Stoll ; Kühnelt ; Cabrera ;

(b) *Negative Votes, two (2) :*

Hering ; do Amaral ;

(c) *Voting Papers not returned :*

None.

**15. Declaration of Result of Vote :** On 28th October 1956, Mr. Hemming, Secretary to the International Commission, acting as Returning Officer for the Vote taken on Voting Paper V.P.(56) 35, signed a Certificate that the Votes cast were as set out in paragraph 14 above and declaring that the proposal submitted in the foregoing Voting Paper had been duly adopted and that the decision so taken was the decision of the International Commission in the matter aforesaid.

**16. Preparation of the Ruling given in the present “ Direction ”:** On 3rd April 1957 Mr. Hemming prepared the Ruling given in the present *Direction* and at the same time signed a Certificate that

the terms of that Ruling were in complete accord with those of the proposal approved by the International Commission in its Vote on Voting Paper V.P.(56)35.

17. The prescribed procedures were duly complied with by the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature in dealing with the present case, and the present *Direction* is accordingly hereby rendered in the name of the said International Commission by the under-signed Francis Hemming, Secretary to the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature, in virtue of all and every the powers conferred upon him in that behalf.

18. The present *Direction* shall be known as *Direction Seventy-One (71)* of the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature.

DONE in London, this Third day of April, Nineteen Hundred and Fifty-Seven.

*Secretary to the International Commission  
on Zoological Nomenclature*

**FRANCIS HEMMING**